

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**  
November 5, 2003

**Contact: David Marin**  
(202) 225-5074

**Davis Reviewing DHS Acquisition Framework**  
***Letter to Ridge Requests Information on Efforts to Address Challenges***

**Washington, D.C.** -- House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) sent a letter today to Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Tom Ridge noting the Committee is in the process of examining the development and management of the Department's acquisition organization. The letter requests answers to numerous questions focused on DHS "efforts to address its acquisition management challenges and develop an integrated acquisition organization that eliminates duplication stemming from the merger of so many different agencies."

The Nov. 5 letter comes on the heels of a letter Davis sent last week to DHS focused more specifically on needed improvements to legacy contracting processes at the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Government Reform Committee has broad jurisdiction over the economy and efficiency of government operations, including federal procurement.

A copy of the most recent letter to DHS follows:

November 5, 2003

The Honorable Tom Ridge  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I would like to commend you and the thousands of dedicated staff at the Department of Homeland Security for your hard work over the past year. Combining 23 agencies with more than 180,000 employees into a single organization is a monumental task involving a variety of management challenges. Addressing management challenges such as human capital, information technology management, financial management, and acquisition management early on will be critical to the success of the

new Department. As you know the Committee on Government Reform has a broad jurisdiction covering the economy and efficiency of government operations, including federal procurement. The Committee is very interested in learning more about the Department's efforts to address its acquisition management challenges and develop an integrated acquisition organization that eliminates duplication stemming from the merger of so many different entities, some with their own procurement systems.

There are a variety of issues that must be addressed in developing an acquisition organization. Issues such as coordination, leadership, training, and accountability must all be considered as the Department attempts to pull together the acquisition functions of the various components merged into the Department. In addition, a number of major homeland security procurements are already under way and many others are in the planning stages. A number of these procurements, such as US VISIT and the Coast Guard's Deepwater project, were inherited from the legacy agencies and involve the expenditure of billions of dollars. These purchases must be well-planned and managed to ensure that they achieve expectations and avoid duplication and the wasting of precious taxpayer resources.

The Committee is in the process of examining the development and management of the Department's acquisition organization. The Committee is interested in learning about efforts to eliminate "stovepipe" acquisition systems and create an integrated program. We are also interested in learning how the Department is planning to organize and train its acquisition workforce, and how it is managing and planning for its major procurement programs.

Therefore, pursuant to the Committee's oversight jurisdiction, we would be interested in learning the answers to the following:

1. What are the major challenges and obstacles facing the Department in establishing its acquisition organization?
2. How does the Department plan to integrate the various procurement functions of the component agencies in the Department?
3. What acquisition systems did the Department inherit from its component agencies and how does the Department plan to integrate these systems?
4. How is the Department organizing its acquisition workforce? (Please provide an organizational chart).
5. What is the role of the chief procurement officer, including:
  - a. Does the chief procurement officer have direct authority over other procurement offices within the department?
  - b. How much staff will the chief procurement officer have?

- c. Please provide a description of the division of areas of responsibility within the office of the chief procurement officer.
  - d. What are the chains of responsibility and reporting among individual contracting officers, legacy agency contracting officers, and Department leadership, including the chief procurement officer.
- 6. What plans does the Department have for the creation and review of procurement performance measures?
- 7. What plans does the Department have to train its acquisition workforce?
- 8. Provide a written overview of the planned improvements to contract management, including:
  - a. The status and future plans for the development of a system to notify contracting officers of future procurement needs.
  - b. The status and future plans for the development of ways to hold contracting officers accountable for monitoring, reporting, and documenting contractor performance.
- 9. Describe the development of the Department's financial management system. To what extent will this system be able to produce credible, reliable, and accurate information that can: 1) ensure the agency meets its financial obligations; 2) enhance strategic procurement decisions; and 3) enable effective evaluation and assessment of procurement activities?
- 10. How does the Department plan to minimize duplication of procurements across its functional areas? Will the Department develop a knowledge and information management system that will enable it to track key procurement data so it knows what goods and services it is buying and who the vendors are?

The Committee would appreciate responses to these questions by Friday, November 21, 2003. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you in your efforts to strengthen the security our nation.

Sincerely,

Tom Davis  
Chairman

###